

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2598

As of February 25, 2016

Title: An act relating to authorizing the use of certain cargo extensions that connect to a recreational vehicle frame.

Brief Description: Authorizing the use of certain cargo extensions that connect to a motor home or travel trailer frame.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Orcutt and Clibborn).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/10/16, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/23/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: In Washington, it is generally not lawful to pull more than one trailer at a time behind a motor vehicle. There is an exception for motor carriers under a certain length. The current definition of a "trailer" includes every vehicle without motive power designed for being drawn by or used in conjunction with a motor vehicle constructed so that no appreciable part of its weight rests upon or is carried by such motor vehicle.

There are cargo carriers currently available on the market that attach to the left and right sides of a frame of a recreational vehicle and do not pivot on a trailer hitch as a trailer, but become a part of the recreational vehicle through the way it is connected. These carriers typically have an axle that acts as a tag axle to assist in carrying the weight of the cargo. Current statutes do not address recreational vehicle cargo extensions or carriers.

Summary of Bill: The definition of "trailer" is modified to exclude cargo extensions. Cargo extensions are defined as a device that connects to the left and right side of a motor home or travel trailer frame and (1) becomes part of the frame, (2) does not pivot on a hitch, and (3) has a axle with two wheels, acting as a tag axle, to safely carry the weight of the cargo.

Cargo extensions must be equipped with:

- fenders, covers, flaps or splash aprons
- at least two tail lamps mounted on the rear

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- tail lights

Cargo extensions are exempt from being equipped with brakes, provided that the gross weight of the cargo extension does not exceed 3000 pounds and the total weight of the cargo extension does not exceed 40 percent of the gross weight of the towing vehicle.

A motor home or travel trailer with one cargo extension is designated as a lawful combination of vehicles that may be operated in Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2016.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: A constituent brought this bill to me. We should give our residents the opportunity to carry more cargo with them as they use their recreational vehicles. I worked with the State Patrol to make sure that we made this as safe as possible. The wheels on the extension act to support the additional weight, without burdening the frame that the extension is being attached to.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Orcutt, Prime Sponsor; Robert Wright, self.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.